1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

609 a large party of women who had assembled to keen over an old
157 woman who had just died. Pigs also were driven off, and a youth, who was caught lurking near us to 'rescue' three stray cows and brought to me, advanced to me as delicately as Agag, with his knife unsheathed and held in readiness to defend his life. This lad was quickly reassured and shouted out, whereupon to our surprise four or five other lads came down from trees around us, where they had taken shelter, their curiosity being on the whole stronger than their fear. Ultimately the women felt that the corpse could not be left unmourned any longer, and came back in twos and threes to be reassured by the boys. They were then in two minds whether to resume keening or to see as much as possible of the queer ways of so unheard-of an apparition as a white man. When I came to see the keening it was altogether too much, and they at once left the body and crowded round me; when I had it explained that I wanted to see how funerals were conducted and to photograph them, they very obligingly squatted down in their original places, and began even more doleful keenings than before. It seemed only proper to remove my distracting presence as soon as I could, but the keepers were with difficulty dissuaded from seeing me on my way to Adeq.

Timidity of this kind is unusual among the Bison-horn Marias; but there are many villages among them where few women can have seen a white man. To appear on foot or on a car along a forest road where groups of women are gathering forest fruits is usually the signal for them to rush off into the thickets, leaving their baskets and gear: but if you return that way later after having spent an hour or two in neighbouring villages, they will come timidly out to you on the road, and gradually lose their earlier fears.

152 The highlanders and lowlanders alike are extremely curious. In the Abujhmar hills I have frequently had parties of men, youths and girls coming into my tent or hut to see my strange ways of getting up, shaving and dressing, and their curiosity has been embarrassing when they have tried to watch even the performance of natural functions. I have had to brush my hair a dozen times over to satisfy those who had not seen me do it the first time, and to demonstrate the use of every article on my dressing or office tables. They will sit for hours watching a typewriter, and speculating on how it works. A motor-car is a source of endless delight, whether it be the distorted reflections seen in the polished radiator, or the noises of the bulb and electric horns. They thump it to test its materials, or crawl underneath to be fascinated by the strange sights that reward their trouble. But it takes time to get them to agree to try a ride inside, and when they do, they start off with

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Beloea in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tita*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tita de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking puda, peking puda* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

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585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke neuta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangārām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke neuta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare neuta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

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Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

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By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

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Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *joddār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 836 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered. 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

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How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently: at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

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The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathizes in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organize the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bonde pelo*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nān nān chingro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lāmi hānia,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihār Rāja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 32. The sex-dance of the sub-human primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

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and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, head-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

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586 40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were [333] suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

593 The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. Jealousy

●152 Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough; 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

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to share: and each development, each advance on the part of mankind can be traced back to the opposite formula: ability to share'.[1] 152

The absence of jealousy among primitive people has often been noticed and Hartland has given a long list of tribes remarkable for this amiable trait. Since he connects it, however, with general promiscuity, indifference to the marriage tie and a fundamental belief that primitive man is incapable of real love, his study does not throw very much light on Muria conditions. Westermarck and Briffault have also each filled a chapter with rather dubious evidence on the subject from all parts of the world, which would have had greater value had there been an agreed definition of jealousy among their authorities.

As with the problem of pre-nuptial chastity, so with jealousy, our evidence is confused, contradictory and little of it would be admitted in a court of law. The result is that it is possible to produce equally imposing lists both of those peoples who are temperamentally jealous and of those who are not.

Even in Bastar two tribes living side by side present a notable contrast in this matter; the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Sukma are notorious for the violence of their jealous and suspicious temperament which fills the jail at Jagdalpur with homicides; the Muria are no less remarkable for an almost complete absence of this passion. I do not think it is possible to lay down a rule; doubtless some tribes are more attached to possession, dignity, prestige than others. Jealousy always has its roots in something else.

But what is so interesting about the Muria is that they recognize jealousy as a problem, accept it as a danger to marital happiness, and direct the education of their children towards eliminating it from their psychology.

The ghotul trains its members in a strict equality; on the whole, just as in a big family, it manages fairly successfully to laugh out of countenance dignity and prestige; it sets its face against possessiveness and the desire for the exclusive enjoyment of anything; it insists on things being shared. Even the *jodidār* ghotul, where girls are allotted to their partners in a fairly permanent relation, achieves this in no small measure; and the newer type succeeds in an unusual degree in eliminating jealousy. Undoubtedly, as I have said already, there is a very remarkable general diffused affection among the boys and girls. The sense of property and possession is certainly lessened; policemen have told me that they believe the small amount of crime in the north of Bastar is due to the fact that Muria children learn while still in the ghotul to share things with everybody else and not to grab them for themselves. As the chelik said at Ulera, 'There is equal love for all, just as in a family'. 883X 152 867

Naturally there will be moments of strain, particularly when there are a few boys and girls of outstanding physical attraction in the ghotul; yet sexual jealousy between boys is certainly lessened. An old Muria of Jaitpuri, recalling his ghotul days, said that there was a girl in the ghotul whom he loved very much. 'When she slept with other boys I used to feel a little jealous, but I said to myself, "This ghotul life is only for four days and in any case if I don't have her today, I'll have her tomorrow".' In the ghotul two friends will lie down with a girl between them, and sometimes—as at Sidhawand—a group of boys occupies a corner of the ghotul with a group of girls, every one of whom is shared among them. Several of my chelik friends have told me that they have slept again and again with every girl in the ghotul.

There are, of course, exceptions. Ghotul differ from one another, a few deviating widely from the classical model. The younger boys are sometimes jealous of their seniors; I have noticed this at Masora and Markabera. As 883X 152

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy', Forbath, op. cit., p. 359.

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883 I have remarked elsewhere, the situation in the Binjhli ghotul at the end of 1940 was in many ways unique. Here was a large number of girls including 852 several between the ages of seventeen and twenty, and the tension was often rather acute between the drab-looking older girls, some of whom had had more than one abortion, and the fresh, bright, lovely, younger motiari. These naturally wanted to sleep with the younger and more attractive boys, but so also did the older girls. One of the younger girls told my wife how the older girls are always jealous of the young and beautiful motiari. Sometimes they catch hold of their hands and forcibly pull them away from the more handsome and amusing boys, saying, "I know you want to sleep with him, *bāplotia*, but you're not to. You go and sleep over there". And the younger girls have to go away, disappointed, to some other boy. There is a lot of hatred between beautiful motiari and the Belosa. The chelik can say nothing. A chelik must never ask a girl to sleep with him. The ghotul is ruled by girls." I remember very vividly the tense atmosphere in this ghotul one Friday night (the night they sleep together) when the allotment of partners was going on.

Another girl said that when she was forced to sleep with a boy she disliked and saw some of the older girls lying down on the mat of her special friend, she would sometimes scream with temper and lie awake all night burning with jealousy.

The situation in the Binjhli ghotul at that particular time, however, was, I think, exceptional and I have not found anything to parallel it elsewhere. Generally the girls and boys live together very happily.

The ghotul system is well adapted to train both boys and girls in sexual self-confidence. Pathological jealousy is often due to a sort of psychic impotence; it is a symptom of self-mistrust and of dread that one is sexually or otherwise incompetent. 'Jealousy is the projection of one's own insufficiency upon the partner.' But chelik and motiari do not generally feel insufficient: their life is so full and happy, so supported by mutual love and admiration that they approach their life-partners with natural confidence that they can satisfy and thus possess them wholly.

Another possible reason why the Muria are so free from jealousy is the absence of homosexuality, the importance of which in this matter has been stressed by Stekel in an acute analysis.[1]

The ghotul attacks jealousy partly by its tradition that it is a passion unworthy of chelik or motiari, partly by a frank sexual communism, sometimes—as in the *jodidār* ghotul—by the opposite method of making infidelity so difficult and so condemned that no boy or girl need worry about their exclusive possession. But in every case I believe that the strong sense of ghotul solidarity is the most powerful agent against jealousy.

After marriage, the fellowship of the ghotul widens out into the fellowship 152 of the tribe. Sexual communism is no longer practised, but a great deal of the fear that Descartes noticed as a root of jealousy is eliminated by the strong social feeling against adultery; Muria simply do not commit this crime just as they do not commit the crime of theft, and therefore there is no need to fill one's mind with fears about the safety of one's possessions. Since love is not afraid, it is not possessive. Adultery is not only socially condemned, it is very dangerous; it casts a blight on the village, it ruins the ritual hunt, it diverts the fisherman from his catch, it brings wild beasts upon the cattle, and it causes the offenders to swell all over and perhaps even die. Social and supernatural sanctions alike make it unnecessary to be jealous.

[1] Stekel, op. cit., pp. 360ff.

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626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never
152 refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by
152 another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing
837 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

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A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it is as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

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be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tohirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Oriya tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

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for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bārī,
Tor mutha to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nakti mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

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will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *jutkhi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

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I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lamhada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *mailotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Mussalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psychoneurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

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less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Babe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamkot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sabapal, the younger Belose of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

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I. Murder for gain. 674x
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674x 152
for where is the property to be acquired? It would be laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 688

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME; FATIGUE

An important individual and mesological cause of crime which is largely overlooked in discussions of the subject in India is fatigue. This is so relevant that I make no apology for quoting Kinberg at length upon the subject. Fatigue is the result of environment conditions, work, or other circumstances that strain the working capacity and willingness of the individual and may in its turn produce serious psychical changes, sometimes of a pathological kind.

'Great exhaustion will occasionally produce actual psychoses of a confusive type. A disturbed consciousness of externals, the presence of hallucinations and delusional ideas, may then naturally enough produce criminal actions. But even in cases where fatigue does not give rise to such pronounced mental disorders, it may produce a change of personality which, under certain circumstances, may result in criminal actions.

'The psychological fatigue-phenomena that are of special importance as crime factors are a strong feeling of dysphoria, dejection and irritability, worry, desperation, and an unreflecting, vague wish to escape from a situation which seems intolerable. Any intensification of the complicated emotional condition may cause a tendency to obnubilation, which weakens further the automatic action control.

'In recent years I have seen many cases by which my attention has been drawn to the crimino-etiological significance of fatigue. Most of these belonged to the agricultural classes—daughters or wives of small farmers. As a rule, small farmers in Sweden, whether freehold or tenant, cannot afford to hire sufficient labour. All the members of the family, husband, wife and children, must therefore strain every nerve to keep the whole going. This labour is particularly hard on the married women, who, besides tending the cattle and working in the fields, must also do all the domestic work, and to whom, above all, pregnancy is an additional burden'.[1]

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 215.

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I believe that this may explain some of the apparently inexplicable aboriginal crimes in Bastar where, for example, a man kills a dearly-loved wife in a flash of temper simply because his dinner is not ready in time. Marvi Mundra and his wife came home very late one evening in October after working all day in the fields. When they reached the house, the girl at once began to cook their supper, and after a short time Mundra asked if it was ready. She said rather crossly that it was on the fire, and that directly it was ready she would give it to him. Mundra, exhausted by his long day in the fields and by the prospect of a still longer night watching the crops, lost his normal 'automatic control', picked up a stick from the fire and gave his wife three heavy blows which killed her.

Barse Kama, a man about thirty-five years old, earned his living by grazing the village cattle. His wife who was eight months with child had been out collecting young bamboo shoots for food. Kama came in at midday exhausted, and found that his food was not ready and his wife was lying down for a brief rest. She explained that she had only just returned from the jungle, and was very tired. He abused her and she replied that she could not prepare the meal any faster, and that if he wanted food more quickly he had better find another woman. Kama experienced a sudden explosion of rage, picked up his axe and struck his wife as she was lying on the mat. She died that night. Kama claimed that he was drunk at the time, but this was not accepted by the Court. In fact, he was intoxicated with fatigue.

Veko Dome, about twenty-five years old, was very busy gathering the kosra grain in his fields. On the eve of the tragedy, in the last week of November 1922, there was no rice in his house, and the family took gruel in the morning and in the evening drank a little of what was left. They all went to sleep without any proper food. Dome himself did not even get the stale gruel in the evening. Early next morning he went to his field again, and while he was away the rest of the family had some gruel. Then Dome's wife and his aunt Torka went to the fields to work. It had by now begun to drizzle. Dome asked his aunt if she had brought his food. She said as it was raining she had not brought any, and told him to go home and get it. At this he grumbled

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and the old woman was annoyed and said, 'What have you been doing in the field? Have you been eating excreta?' The women squatted down and began to reap the kosra. Dome quietly went and got his axe, walked up behind his aunt and struck her several times on the head, and she died without a sound. Dome went into the jungle for a time but returned home in the evening, drank some gruel and went to sleep in a hut behind the house. He had been working hard in the fields since the middle of the preceding day, and had had no food at all. His exhaustion drove him as surely as any alcoholic orgy to commit his crime.

Murders arising because a wife or other relation fails to give food in time may also be connected with the powerful oral needs of all aboriginals, which reflect the infantile nature of their culture. Laubscher has studied the underlying causes for the large number of stock thefts in South Africa. He finds that these are ultimately based on the people's craving for meat. The Tembu tribesman places a great value on meat as a food and whenever it is available he gorges himself to the utmost. 'There is something ravenously sadistic in his attitude towards meat. It is not only a great delicacy, but it is credited with great health-giving qualities. Elders have frequently remarked that the change of the times, the paucity of cattle, sheep and goats, have reduced to a minimum the meat supplies of the people. Once upon a time when cattle roamed in huge herds and they had plenty of meat to eat, their people were strong and healthy, but now they only have meat once or twice a month, and then not sufficient is available to make them feel they need not eat again for a few days'.[1]

Cattle theft is similarly very common among the Maria, and I have little doubt that a denial of oral needs that are commonly fulfilled without difficulty, throws them off their balance and drives them to violence. As among the Tembu, these oral activities are shown in the Maria's craving for bulk in food—their love of tobacco to smoke and chew and their delight in alcohol.

Oral needs are closely connected with the sexual impulse. It is remarkable that in no fewer than six cases, murder directly followed a wife's refusal to allow her husband sexual

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 303.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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congress. Habka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated banda knife (Length 3')

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.